

ABSTRACT OF DISCLOSURE

An absorbent member is disclosed which has a high absorbent capacity and which exhibits exceptional expansion properties when wetted by an aqueous fluid. The absorbent member includes a multitude of randomly oriented cellulosic fibers having an average length of from between about 1 mm to about 5 mm and containing at least about 20% lignin within each fiber. The absorbent member also has a moisture content of from between about 1% to about 20% water by weight of fiber. The absorbent member further has a bulk density in the range of from between about 0.5 g/cc to about 1g/cc and a compression factor of at least about 5. The fibers are stressed and bonded by hydrogen bonds and are retained in an elastically stressed condition.

[illegible]